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FROM THE LONDON EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

Memoir of the late Rev. John Caspar Lavater.

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TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Sir,

YOU have expressed a wish for a short account of Mr. LAVATER's Life in your Magazine. I feel the more willing to comply with your request, as I have had many opportunities to observe, that Mr. Lavater is not so well known in this country as, in my humble opinion, he deserves to be. Some persons being, perhaps, only acquainted with the eccentricities of his Physiognomical Works, seem disposed to decry him altogether as an enthusiast; and, as for his religious principles, some are pleased to call him a Socinian; and others, I am told, have very gravely accused him of having lived and died a champion of Popish superstition. All these misrepresentations would be rectified, if the account of his life, which has been published by his son-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Gesner, in three octavo volumes, were translated from the German, or at least its most essential parts. By this means every reader would be enabled to appreciate the character of Mr. Lavater, who (notwithstanding all his imperfections) for talents, extensive knowledge, unremitting zeal and activity, noble courage, unfeigned Christian piety, and universal benevolence, deserves to hold a distinguished place among the most excellent Divines of ancient or modern times.

Being circumscribed by the plan of your work, which admits only a few pages for Memoirs, I have confined myself to a short narration of the most remarkable events of his life, which are taken, for the most part, from Mr. Gesner's Works; in the selection of which I have paid a principal regard to his private and religious character.

C. F. STEINKOPFFT.

Savoy, London, Nov. 13, 1804.

JOHN CASPAR LAVATER was born in the year 1741, of very respectable parents, in the city of Zurich, Switzerland, who, to the best of their knowledge and abilities, educated him

in the strictest principles of virtue and religion.

From his infancy he had many serious impressions; and, when only seven years old, felt himself strongly drawn to seek God by prayer. "To *use* God," says he, "as my *own* God, was one of the earliest and most deeply impressed ideas in my mind.—Observing the indifference of others towards God, I was determined to make the best use of him I could. I felt a need of his presence, and made it a constant practice to pour out my heart before him in fervent prayer every morning and evening: yet my light and volatile disposition oftentimes disturbed me in my devotions. To listen to the sermons was too tiresome for me, so I took my little pocket Bible to the place of worship; and, with the greatest eagerness, I read the Histories of the Old Testament, more especially that of Elias and Elisha. Christ and the New Testament had but a small share of my attention or affection at that time."

When ten years of age, young Lavater freely declared his intention to devote himself to the ministry, and, notwithstanding all the objections and difficulties he had to encounter, he never changed his mind; but zealously applied himself to the study of the Latin language, and other branches of human learning requisite for this purpose.

In his fourteenth year he had a dangerous fit of sickness.—"When thus taken ill," says he, "I seriously reflected upon my former life, endeavouring to purify my heart, most heartily forgiving every received injury, and asking pardon of all those to whom I suspected I had given the least offence." This illness, he adds, left behind it many a serious impression.

Soon after this, having taken a long walk on a very hot day, and too eagerly drinking more wine than he could bear, he got nearly intoxicated; which grieved him to his very heart.

"Hardly," says he, "any occurrence in my whole life has made such an indelible impression upon my mind as this accident. I shed streams of penitential tears, and nothing could erase the remembrance of it from my mind; and, even now, after the lapse of twenty-six years, it serves me as a powerful warning never to exceed moderation in drinking, in the least degree."

In the fifteenth year of his age, a violent shock of an earthquake, and the happy departure of his elder brother, greatly contributed to confirm and to increase the good impressions and pious resolutions of his mind.

"When," says he, "my brother was in his last moments, he sat up in his bed, lifted up his hands, and, looking up stedfastly toward Heaven, exclaimed,—"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—Thus saying, he sunk down and expired. All of us were dissolved in tears. Now I saw my brother a dead corpse on the very same spot on which I was born, I felt quite heavenly-minded.—Death and Heaven were my only thoughts; so I went to bed; but when I awoke the next

morning, I felt quite pleased in my having become the eldest son of the family, and the heir of the cabinet of natural curiosities which my brother had collected. I could not help abhorring myself, on account of this sudden change of mind.—"Oh! vanity of vanities! all, indeed, is vanity!"

When young Lavater entered upon his academical course, his talents soon began to shine forth so brilliantly, as to attract the notice of the most learned characters who were at that time Professors in the College at Zurich, some of whom endeavoured to encourage and direct his rising genius.

During the three years of his studying divinity, he was most deeply impressed with a sense of the infinite importance of well-employed or mis-spent time; and had such views of the awfulness of sin and the holiness of God, that he oftentimes humbled himself in the dust. He made it a point of conscience daily to examine himself, watching over all his thoughts, words, and actions, and most sincerely bewailing, not only every improper action which he had done, but even every impure motive which might have influenced his conduct. At the same time, Christ, in his person, and all his endearing characters and offices, was rendered exceedingly precious to his soul. To him he approached, "weary and heavy laden," seeking rest for his immortal soul, and entirely devoting himself to his blessed service.

In confirmation of what has just been stated, we subjoin a few extracts from Mr. Lavater's journals and letters, written about this time. In the early part of his twentieth year he thus expresses his feelings in a letter to a friend:

"Alas! what a sinner I am! Oh! that all created beings might weep before God on my behalf! and yet their combined efforts could not save me. *No, no! I have sinned against the infinite Majesty of Heaven! but, lo! the Creator himself becomes man—my brother! He lies prostrate before his Father! he prays, and wrestles, and sheds tears of blood for me—even for *me!* Oh, what boundless love and compassion! I am lost in wonder, love, and praise, and melted in tears of shame and gratitude! I bow before him, and adore!".....

In another place, he says,—"When I examine the secret springs of my actions, words, and thoughts, sincerely as in the presence of God, I must confess that I do not always act from a principle of pure love to God, and a sincere regard to his glory; but alas! too often I observe selfish motives, which I cannot but consider as grievously sinful. Genuine religion rests not satisfied with a mere outward form; it requires the heart. All virtues, considered in themselves, are a mere mechanical motion, if they are void of the Spirit's enlivening influence. Morality, without the heart, is like a body without a

* It may not be improper to observe, that Mr. Lavater most carefully "fled youthful lusts;" and was very much esteemed by all who knew him, on account of the regularity of his conduct, and the virtuous life he led.

soul. Both reason and revelation plainly tell us, that our good actions have no value whatsoever, if God be not their source, aim, and end. Now, for my own part, I will not deny the real good which the grace of God enables me to perform; for instance, when I give alms, I seldom can discover any thing in it like hypocrisy, but rather I do it with the sincerest joy, and generally with a single eye to the glory of God. But, alas! too often I observe, in the course of my conversation with others, a want of that simplicity and sincerity which are so precious in the sight of God, and for the attainment of which I long. Often I use improper expressions, and speak in a way dictated by self-love, seeking not so much the glory of God as to please myself. Sometimes pure motives to please God are so intermingled with an impure desire to please myself, that I can hardly ascertain which is the prevailing principle. From this I cannot but infer, that I am not free from pride; and should any doubt remain whether this really be the case, my being so very prone to anger, and that inward grief I feel within when reproved for any thing done amiss, ought to convince me that I have a proud and irritable temper."

"I know," says he, in another letter, "that I am wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: but, blessed be God, there is a book called the Bible, in which I meet with a plentiful supply of the most approved and never-failing remedies, by a good use of which I may become rich, healthy, and clothed. I know that I cannot be saved without love to God and man; for, without it, no true happiness can possibly exist. Now, the Holy Scriptures tell me that love is the fruit of the Spirit: that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. But how am I to obtain this sacred Spirit? This Jesus plainly tells me, Luke xi. 13. How foolish, then, any longer to delay!.....,....."

"All that can render a man completely happy, both in this world and the world to come, is set forth in the Scriptures in the most distinct, exalted, and solid way; so that there is no book in the world which could lead us to any higher degree of wisdom, virtue, and happiness, than that which is obtainable by attending to the blessed doctrines of the Bible.....

"One, and only one there is, in whom I find ten thousand times more delight than in every thing else. I mean Him who was God, who is to be the Judge of the world, who, *for me*, became man, to reconcile me to God! O! how happy am I! Now my soul feels its immortality!"

In another letter, Mr. Lavater, after having described the sinful situation of a wicked man in his dying hours, thus addresses his friend:

"O, my dear friend! I rejoice over you; but, pray, never depart any more from the good way of righteousness! Never look back! First of all, endeavour to be reconciled to God by a dying Saviour, and then you may cheerfully run the way of his commandments.

"Until you have felt a godly sorrow, and an anxious concern about your sins; until you have bewailed them with tears of the most unfeigned repentance; until you cheerfully give up your weeping heart to the Son of God, deeply lamenting those very sins that nailed him to the cross; until you become *sick*, as it were, with *love* to him; until you confidently embrace his knees, humbly applying for a blessed experience of his healing powers; until you have repeatedly experienced and exercised these things, you must never flatter yourself with making real advances in the Christian life. I know, by sad experience, how often we fall into sin and temptation, so long as we remain too fondly attached to any object of earth and sense. If we do not deeply abhor and detest sin, from an experimental view of its exceeding great sinfulness and awful consequences, we go our way, and fondly imagine that we are better than the common bulk of sinners; but even the smallest remainder of the most subtle pride may prove a snare to us, to lead us astray from the narrow way of life."

In the year 1762, Mr. Lavater, after having finished his Theological Studies, entered into holy orders, to the great satisfaction of his professors; but under very humble views of his own attainments.

"The principal duties of my new station," says he, "require a close application to the acquisition of solid and scientific knowledge, and of exemplary piety, which ought eminently to shine far above the virtues of the very best private Christians. A clergyman ought to be possessed of a very solid and extensive knowledge of the languages, and of philosophy; but my progress in these necessary branches of learning is very imperfect; and how infinitely short do I fall of those moral accomplishments which ought to adorn a worthy minister!

"But, shall I rest satisfied with this humble confession?—No.—I will humbly cast myself down before my Creator and Redeemer, and firmly resolve to strive after the highest degree of perfection; never to make a stand; never to get weary in honouring God; above all things, not to become the slave of man; not to look for my own advantage; but I will endeavour, by the grace of God, to try all my actions by the rule of St. Paul:—*Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* Thus acting, I shall prove a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and act in a manner becoming his faithful servant."

Soon after his ordination, he thus addressed one of his dearest friends:—"You have preached this day; and, I trust, with much success. O let us consider the infinite importance of addressing immortal beings in the name of God! May the principle of St. Paul never fail to be yours: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves, your servants, for Christ's sake."

Mr. Lavater was only twenty-one years old when he performed an action which cannot but highly interest every impartial reader in his favour:—There lived in the city of Zurich, and even a member of its senate, a most wretched charac-

ter, who, during the time he had been Prefect over a district of the Canton, had committed innumerable acts of the grossest injustice; yea, such abominable crimes, that all the country people loudly reproached and cursed him; but no one dared to call him to public account, he being related to several gentlemen who were members of the Zurich government, and son-in-law to the principal magistrate of the city. Mr. Lavater, after having often heard of, and duly examined into, the atrocities of the Prefect, committed even against helpless widows and orphans, could at last no longer refrain himself: his tender feeling heart was glowing with the noblest sentiments of justice and humanity, and felt an irresistible desire to plead the cause of the poor and oppressed. He was fully aware that his stepping forward in this cause would expose him to the frowns of the great and mighty, and occasion much uneasiness and anxiety even to his nearest and dearest relations; but he was determined to obey God rather than man. Having prepared himself by earnest prayer, and consulted an intimate friend, he first addressed a letter to the Prefect; in which he strongly reproached him for his detestable actions; and freely declared his full intention to bring him to public justice, should he not restore his spoils within the term of two months. This time having elapsed, and the warning proving in vain, Mr. Lavater proceeded to print a most solemn indictment against him; which he caused to be delivered to every Member of the Zurich government. At first he kept his name a secret; but when called upon, he came forward in the most open manner, nobly avowed and fully proved the points of his indictment before the whole assembly of the Senate; and had the unspeakable satisfaction to see the wicked Prefect, who, conscious of his guilt, had saved himself by flight, solemnly condemned by law, his unjust property confiscated, and restoration made to the triumphant cause of oppressed poverty and innocence.

[To be continued.]

For the Connecticut Magazine.

A Dissertation on the Prophecies that have been fulfilled, are now fulfilling, or will hereafter be fulfilled relative to the great period of 1260 *years, the Papal and Mohammedan apostacies, the tyrannical reign of anti-christ, or the infidel power, and the restoration of the Jews.*

BY GEORGE STANLEY FABER, B.D.
Vicar of Stockton-upon-Tees.

In two volumes, octavo, London edition, 1806.

NO. I.

AS these volumes are evidently written with great ability by the learned Author, and contain matter interesting, in a high degree, to the religious and learned world, especially at the present day, when all nations are shaken to their foundations, and when there is a general expectation excited in the church, that the joyful period is near at hand, when *the desire of all nations* shall come, we purpose, in several numbers, to give the outline of this work, with a special design to draw a more general attention to the work

itself. We are fully sensible of the difficulty of this undertaking, and that complete justice cannot be done either to the Author or the subject, by any abstract whatever, much less by any which we shall be able to make, still we hope to do that degree of justice to both, as to attain, in a good degree, the main object in view.

In the present number we shall attempt a summary of the author's account of *the symbolic language of prophecy:* and of the scriptural phrases, *the latter days*, *the last days*, and *the time of the end.* The predictions of Daniel and St. John, says the author, Daniel's last prophecy excepted, are written in the language of symbols, the import of which must be ascertained. And here it is proper to remark that different symbols may express the same thing, as two or more words, in ordinary language often do; these *synonyms*, so far from creating confusion, enrich a language, and heighten the beauty of the imagery; but the same symbols, are never used to express different things which are not analogically related to each other, as words in ordinary language often are; for then a prophesy couched in such *ambiguous terms* must be wholly unintelligible; because, the context cannot, as in ordinary language, remove *the ambiguity.* Hence the language of symbols is, in one respect, more perfect than ordinary language, for while it possesses the advantage of variety, it is free from the obscurity of ambiguous terms. The same symbols indeed are divided into two grand classes, and sometimes represent *temporal*, and sometimes *spiritual* objects; and each *leading symbol* is generally connected with several others, which nature has united in one complex object. Thus *the symbolical heaven* includes *the sun*, *the moon*, and *the stars*, and thus *the symbolical earth* includes *the sea*, *the rivers*, *the islands*, and *the mountains.*

1st. *The symbolical heaven*, taken *temporally* means *the whole body politic.* As such it includes the *sun*, or the sovereign power, *the moon*, the people, and *the stars*, the princes and nobles of the realm. If the empire be divided, *the sun* will be the government of that state which is *pre-eminent* above the rest, *the stars* will be the other sovereigns, and *the moon*, *the people* of the whole empire. Hence, *the blackening of the sun*, *the turning of the moon into blood*, *the falling of the stars*, or *the departing of the heavens like a scroll*, will mean *the subversion of a kingdom or empire*, while *the shooting of a star* from heaven to earth, will mean *the down-fall of a sovereign prince.* On the same principle, *an eclipse of the heavenly bodies* will mean *a partial calamity* short of utter subversion. By *the sun's scorching* men with fire *a grievous tyranny* of the supreme power will be denoted. If *the air* be used for *political heaven*, then *thunder*, *lightning*, *hail*, *and clouds*, will denote *convulsions*, *tumults*, *uproars* in the sickly or expiring *body-politic.* But if taken *spiritually the symbolical heaven* will mean *the church militant*, *the sun* will be *Christ*, *the moon*, *the church*, and *the stars*, *pastors* and *teachers.* Christ, *as a priest*, will be *the bright and morning star*, *dews and gentle rains* will be *the graces of the Holy Spirit:* and *the new heavens* will be *the church triumphant.*

2d. The earth taken *temporally* will be *the dominions of a Pagan or irreligious prince*, *the sea* will be *nations* in *a tumultuary state*, *a flood*, *a large body of men put in*

motion for an evil purpose. Rivers and fountains will be *nations with their political heads in a tranquil state. An earthquake, a sudden convulsion in an empire. Mountains and islands* will be *kingdoms and states.* These symbols, taken in *a limited sense*, often apply to *the empire*, in open opposition to *the church of Christ*, at the period of the events predicted, *exclusively.* Thus the several Pagan empires have been, successively, *the symbolical earth* to the existing church, or *symbolical heaven.* In the apocalypse, the *temporal* symbol *earth* always means *the terrestrial dominions of the Roman empire*, under its *sixth* or *seventh* head: and the other symbols connected with it as their head, have a like limitation. Very few of this set of symbols are to be taken *spiritually; the earth*, however, when so taken, denotes a state of *Paganism* or *apostacy—a mountain* imports *the triumphant kingdom of the Messiah*, being exalted above all other *mountains* or *kingdoms*, and *hills* or *petty states.* As *temporal rivers* denote nations in *a settled state*, so *a pure river of water of life* denotes the state of *eternal rest.* And as *the temporal sea* means *nations in tumult*, so in the state of future bliss, there shall be *no more sea.*

3d. The third set of symbols commences with that of *a city.* In the apocalypse two cities are mentioned, *the great city*, and *the holy city. The great city* is the Roman empire, *secular* and *papal*, whose mystic name is *Babylon: The holy city* is *the church of Christ*, whose mystic name is *Jerusalem.* Accordingly *the great city* is exhibited in its two-fold character as *a harlot* or *apostate church* riding triumphant on *a beast*, or *idolatrous empire.* It is said to consist of ten parts or *streets*, answering to *the ten horns* of the beast, which denote *ten kingdoms.* Here is *the seat* or *throne* of the dragon, which he has transferred to his delegate *the beast. This great city* is seated upon *the sea*, her *merchants* and *ship-masters* are *the great men of the earth*, or *Roman empire. The beloved city*, or residence of the church, is called *a camp*, because the church is *militant.* This city, like *the literal Jerusalem*, hath *a temple*, an *altar*, and *a court without the temple, a sanctuary, a daily sacrifice, the throne of God*, and *the ark of the covenant.* In this temple also are *two olive trees*, and *two candlesticks*, or, *two witnesses* of Christ. *The truly pious* are *the mystical temple* of God, *their hearts* are *his throne, their prayers* are *the daily sacrifice* offered on *the altar* before *the ark of the covenant.* As the church is *two-fold, the pre-christian*, and *post-christian church*, we have *two olive trees* and *two candlesticks* to represent it. *The outer court* which, in *the literal temple*, was set apart for *the Gentiles*, represents *nominal Christians: the treading it under foot* signifies the introduction of *heresies* and *apostacies. The taking away of the daily sacrifice*, and *the setting up of the abomination of desolation*, mean the introduction of *apostacies*, and *abolition or interruption of divine worship.*

4th. *A chaste woman* is a symbol of *the true church*, the Lamb's wife; *the seed* of the church, by which her children are born again, is *the word of God.* On the contrary, *a harlot* is a symbol of *an apostate* or *idolatrous church.* In the apocalypse, two women of this opposite character are often mentioned with various and forcible description.

5th. *The vine* is also a symbol of *the church*; that which yields *good fruit* is *the true church*, and that which yields *sour grapes*, called *the vine of the earth*, is *an apostate*

church: hence, *gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth* and *treading the wine press*, denote the wrath of God against *apostates*.

6th. *A wild beast*, considered *prophetically*, is *an empire hostile to the church of Christ*; it never means *a single kingdom* co-existing with other kingdoms, all in joint opposition to *the church*, but always, *an empire, universal* so far as the church is concerned: *its heads*, if it have more than one, will represent its successive *different forms of government*: *its horns*, *different kingdoms* of an empire *partly broken*, co-existing: *its tail* will mean *the anti-christian superstition of the beast*, which renders it *utterly offensive* in the eyes of God: *his dominion* will be *his power of persecution*: *his life* will be his *idolatry* or *apostacy*: *his death* will be *their renunciation*: his *revival* will be *their resumption*; we are not to suppose that when *a beast* ceases to exist, *as a beast*, *all government will cease* within the limits of the empire, nor, that while *his life is prolonged* he will of course have *the power of persecution*; *his dominion may be taken away*, and yet his temporal power, in his own proper territories, may remain.

An ecclesiastical beast is *a spiritual power affecting universal dominion*; *his horns* are *spiritual kingdoms*; such a horn may spring out of a *secular beast*. In that case its *geographical origin* is pointed out. *An ecclesiastical kingdom* may increase to *an ecclesiastical empire*, with ecclesiastical kingdoms subservient to it: hence what in one prophecy is symbolized by the horns of *a secular beast*, may afterwards, in another, be symbolized by *a distinct spiritual beast*. Such a beast is found in the apocalypse, whose character is there marked by the appellation *false prophet*. A beast may have *a natural* and *a spiritual* origin: his *ascending out of the sea* marks his *natural*, and his *ascending out of the bottomless pit*, his *spiritual* origin. The spiritual parent of a beast is *the dragon* or *serpent*. This fierce and noxious reptile, when *simply* mentioned, is *the devil*: when mentioned with *other symbols* it is *the devil* acting through the power marked by *those symbols*. Thus the king of Egypt is termed *a crooked serpent*, and *a dragon* in the midst of his rivers; in like manner, *the great red dragon* of the apocalypse, having *seven heads and ten horns*, is *the devil*, acting through *the seven-headed and ten-horned beast*, or *Roman empire*.

With respect to the phrases, *the latter days*, *the last days*, and *the time of the end*, after the Author, we remark, that throughout the *Old Testament* the different phrases *latter days* and *last days* never in fact occur, the Hebrew expression thus variously rendered is invariably the same, and is literally and properly rendered *the end of days*. This means primarily *any time yet future*, but never, perhaps, the whole period of *the Christian dispensation*. On the contrary, when it is used in its appropriate sense, it marks that period of time which commences at the end of the great apostacy of 1260 *years*, and which expires at the end of the millennium, and at the consummation of all things, or, the period of the millennium and the 75 *years* which will intervene between the end of the 1260 *years* and *the proper commencement of the millennium*, which 75 years will be occupied in the restoration of the Jews, and in the destruction of God's enemies. See Dan. xii. 6, 7, 11, 12. Isa. ii. 2. Mich. iv. 1. Joel ii. 28.

In the *New Testament*, however, there is a real difference between the phrases *the latter times* and *the last days*, both in the original and in

the vulgar translation, and they are never confounded together. Whenever the phrase, *the last days*, is used *declaratively* and not *prophetically* it means *the whole period of the Christian dispensation.* So it is used, Heb. i. 1, 2, and 1 Pet. i. 20. but when the phrases, *latter days* and *last days*, are used *prophetically* they mean *exclusively two successive parts*, of that dispensation. The whole duration of the times of Christianity, *under the reign of the stone*, exclusive of the millennium, or *the reign of the mountain*, is considered in the evangelical predictions as divided into *three periods*; that of *primitive Christianity*, ending with *the fourth trumpet*; that of *the great apostacy during its flourishing state*, detailed under *the two first woe trumpets*: and that of *the reign of anti-christ*, detailed under *the third woe trumpet* and its *seven vials.* The *second* of these periods is termed *the latter times or days, latter*, when compared to the days of primitive Christianity, or *the first period*: *the third* of the *three periods*, or the reign of *the atheistical anti-christ*, is called *the last times or days*, as being so, in relation to the two preceding periods. Accordingly, we find that every *apostolical prediction*, relative to the *latter days*, speaks of certain *superstitious practices* set up by *the little horn of the fourth beast*, during the flourishing period of the apostacy, but never of atheism; and that every *such prediction*, relative to *the last days*, speaks of *atheism* and *the monstrous brood of vices engendered by it*, but never alludes *to the superstitious practices of the apostacy.* For the former of these, see 2 Thess. ii. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iv. 3. Rev. ix. 20. Col. ii. 18, 19, 23. The phrase *latter days* or *times* occurs indeed in one only of these prophecies, but it must be evident that they are all to be referred to the same period of *superstition.* For *the latter* of these, see 2 Tim. iii. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 3. 2 Pet. ii. Jude 4, 19. 1 John ii. 18, 22. iv. 3. In the account indeed which St. John gives of the principles of *anti-christ* he uses *the last time* in the sense of *the whole period of the Christian dispensation*, because he uses it *declaratively*, and as *a generic name* including all persons who deny *the Father* and *the Son* during that period. But *his reign* is confined to *the last days* of *the last time*, and he tells his disciples, *ye have heard that anti-christ shall come.* Indeed, the opinion has ever prevailed in the church, that some *great opponent* of the Messiah would be manifested, at an era far remote from the apostle's days, founded, no doubt, on *the prophecies of Daniel.* St. John, however, warns his disciples to be upon their guard, against *the principles* of anti-christ, which existed in his days, though he was not then *revealed*, in *an embodied* form.—Daniel has described the monster in his *mature* state, as *a king* or *power* "which magnified himself above every God, and who spake marvellous things against the God of gods," and St. John adds, that his detestable principles *were already working*, and it is our lot, to see them embraced by *a whole nation, without disguise. The papacy* answers in no particular to *anti-christ* as marked by St. John, they will co-exist indeed from the rise of the latter, to the end of the 1260 days, and will then perish together.

The phrase, *the time of the end*, so often used by Daniel, the Author conceives, commences with *the termination of the whole* 1260 *days*, the conclusion of the great drama of *the two-fold apostacy*, and *the reign of anti-christ*, and extends through the 75 years, which intervene *between the*

end of the 1260 *days*, and *the beginning of millennial blessedness* : The awful period of God's wrath upon the nations, his enemies. Thus the vision of *the ram* and *the he-goat* is to reach unto *the time of the end. The reformation* from the great apostacy, or *the* prophesying of the two witnesses, is to progress *to the time of the end. The war* of the atheistical king, with the kings of *the north* and *the south*, his *invasion* of Palestine, and his *subsequent destruction*, are to be at *the time of the end. The restoration of the Jews* is to commence at the period, when all these things shall be finished, and consequently, *at the time of the end.* And the prophecies of Daniel are to be sealed, or, are not to be fully accomplished, so as to be completely understood, till *the time of the end.*

[To be continued.]

An Abridgment of Bryant's Observations on the Plagues of Egypt, &c.

(Continued from p. 74.)

Fourth Plague. FLIES. Exodus viii. 20—24.

MOSES was ordered to accost Pharaoh, and to disclose to him the will of God, at the time when he was taking his morning walk upon the banks of the Nile. It was probably a season of customary adoration ; when the prince of the country showed his reverence to the stream which was esteemed so beneficial and sacred. The judgment to be denounced was a plague of Flies, of a particular species, whose sting was painful, and whose bite was intolerable. These were brought over the land in vast numbers.

The Egyptians had particular deities, whose department was to ward off those natural evils to which their votaries were liable ; and the province allotted to several of these deities was to drive away flies. From the supposed influence of the presiding deity many temples were said to have been free from these insects.

But this was not all. These insects, however incredible it may appear, were in many places worshipped. This reverence seems to have been sometimes shown, to prevent their being troublesome ; at other times because they were esteemed sacred to the deity. Nor did the Egyptians, and other ancient nations, only show a regard to flies in general. There was a deity stiled *Deus Musca*, who was particularly worshipped under the character of a fly. The god *Achor* of Cyrene seems to have been of this denomination ; and it is probable that the word *Achor* denoted a Fly, or had some relation to it.

The reason why this kind of fly, spoken of in this Plague, was thought sacred, arose probably from its being esteemed among many nations an instrument of vengeance in the hand of God. The bite or puncture of this insect was terrible ; hence people's fears increased their reverence, especially when it was esteemed a messenger of the gods.

If then such was the worship of this people, nothing could be more striking and determinate than the judgment brought upon them. They were punished by

the very things which they revered; and though they boasted of spells and charms, yet they could not ward off the evil.—They had gods who, they tho't, could avert all mischief; but their power was ineffectual: and both the prince and the people were obliged to acknowledge the inferiority of their own deities, by sueing through Moses to the God of Israel. "Intreat for me," says Pharaoh. "And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the Lord."

Fifth Plague. MURRAIN OF BEASTS. Exodus ix. 1—6.

This judgment, so precisely foretold, and so early carried into execution, must have had a great effect upon the minds of the Egyptians. And when they found that the cattle of the Israelites were exempted from this evil, they could not but perceive the hand of God manifest throughout the whole operation.

We may also observe a particular scope and meaning in this calamity, if we consider it in regard to the Egyptians, which would not have existed with regard to any other people. It is well known that they held in idolatrous reverence the lion, wolf, dog, cat, ape, and goat. But they had gods which were held in still greater reverence than these; such were the ox or steer, the cow, the heifer, and the ram. This judgment therefore displayed upon the kine of Egypt, was very significant in its execution and purport. For when the distemper spread irresistibly over the country, the Egyptians not only suffered a severe loss; but, what was of far greater consequence, they saw the representatives of their deities, and their deities themselves, sink before the God of the Hebrews. Hence it is said by the sacred writer,—"Upon their gods also the Lord executed judgment."

These events, we may well imagine, had a happy influence upon the minds of the Israelites, to whom the worship of the Egyptians must at this time have appeared in a most contemptible light, and their gods despicable. Their separation too, and exemption, during the time of these evils, must have had still greater weight. It rendered them more ready to quit a people, from whom they were in so salutary a manner distinguished; and to embrace a better and more rational religion, whenever it should be offered.

Sixth Plague. BOILS AND BLAINS. Exodus ix. 8—11.

This plague, like those which preceded, was particularly well calculated to confound the Egyptians; and to show the baseness and imbecility of their deities, who could neither ward off the evil when impending, nor afford any alleviation when it was brought on.

The Egyptians had many gods, and those of high rank, who were supposed to preside over pharmacy and medicine; and to these the people looked up with great confidence in all those pains and maladies, to which the human frame is liable. Among these deities Esculapius was held in particular honor, for his skill in this science. This people had also many books of

great antiquity upon the subject of medicine; many of which were attributed to Sesorthrus or rather Torsorthrus, who was supposed by some to have been the same as Esculapius. In consequence of this the Egyptians were always famed for their knowledge in medicine; and their physicians were held in great repute. They were in great numbers in Egypt; each distemper having its proper physician, to which his practice was confined. In these physicians the people reposed great confidence, and they were maintained at the public expense. They joined astrology to physic, by which they founded their pretended foresight in respect to impending maladies; and in consequence of it they were continually prescribing antidotes and preventives to the people.

It pleased God to order his judgments accordingly; and to bring upon this people a fearful disorder, which their deities could not avert, nor the art of man alleviate. He could have caused commotions in the earth, had it seemed fitting, and shaken their high edifices to their basis; or brought on a supernatural inundation, by which their cities had been swept to the deep. But this would not have been sufficiently significant. It seemed therefore good to divine wisdom to be more particular in its judgments. Hence in this instance, as well as in those which preceded, the Egyptians were not only punished; but were shown the baseness of their worship, and the vanity of their confidence, where they most trusted. They had before been infested with flies, and incommoded with vermine; and thro' the pollution of their river, and the murrain of their cattle, been put to great inconveniences.—But this evil was brought more home to them; it was a taint of the human frame, a grievous malady, under which the priests as well as the people smarted, to their astonishment and confusion. Hence it appears that the prince of that country was deserted of his wise men, as well as of his gods. "And the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boil: for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians."

When this judgment was to be inflicted, Aaron and Moses were ordered to take ashes of the furnace; and Moses was to scatter them up towards heaven, that they might be wafted over the face of the country. This mandate was very determinate, and to the last degree significant. The process had an allusion to an idolatrous and cruel rite, which was common among the Egyptians, and to which it is opposed as a contrast. They had several cities styled Typhonian. In these at particular seasons they sacrificed men.—The objects thus destined were foreigners; and it is probable that while the Israelites resided in Egypt, they were chosen from their body. They were burnt alive upon an high altar, and thus sacrificed for the good of the people. At the close of the sacrifice the priests gathered together the ashes of these victims, and scattered them upwards in the air; that where any atom of this dust was wafted, a blessing might be entailed.

The like was done by Moses with the ashes of the fiery furnace, but with a different intention. They were scattered abroad, that wherever any the smallest portion alighted, it might prove a plague and a curse to this ungrateful, cruel, and infatuated people. Thus there was a designed contrast in these workings of Providence, an apparent opposition to the superstition of the times. The powers of darkness were foiled, and the priests and magicians confounded; all which was salutary to the people of God. But the heart of Pharaoh was still hardened.

[To be continued.]

On the Law of God.

BY the law of God is meant that rule of moral virtue, which he hath given to his creatures, for the government of their hearts and their actual conduct in living. It is a comprehensive system of rules, which points out the whole of our duty, whether to God or to his creatures. The law of God comprises precepts and penalties. The preceptive part teaches us in what dispositions and actions our duty consists; the penal appoints what punishment transgression deserves and shall receive. Every intelligent creature, whether angel or man, is necessarily under the law of God, from the first moment of his being, through his whole existence; for, so soon as he exists with the powers for moral action, it is fit these powers should be under a rule directing their exercise to what is wise, just and good. Under this law, every one of us was brought into existence, and shall remain, through this life and ever afterwards; and, all our thoughts, words and actions have been in obedience or disobedience. We cannot, for a single moment, place ourselves in a state exempt from moral obligation.

The law of God is taught, partially, by reason and experience. When our reason or experience teaches us, that both the means and the end are good, and conduce to the glory of God, to the final advantage of men, or to our own perfection and happiness, this knowledge becomes to us a law. Or if, in this manner, we learn its hurtful tendency, this knowledge forbids the performance.

All men have some degree of reason and experience, and thus know something of the law of God, which the apostle meant when he said, those who have not the law, are a law unto themselves. But, as reason is weak and greatly darkened by a sinful heart, it is insufficient to determine many things, which relate to the glory of God and duty of man. For this cause, the Lord hath given us his holy word, containing a sufficient and perfect law of moral duty. To this, in all cases, we are to repair for instruction in our duty to him and to men. It was the moral law contained in the holy scriptures, of which Christ spake when he said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil: For, verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one

tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

These words of our Saviour are the highest authority, on a subject, which we all ought to understand. They teach us the universal and eternal obligation of the divine law. Many persons, who know they are under a moral law, do not consider its eternal bond on creatures, arising from the unchangeable nature of God, and their relation to him and to each other. Some conceive it a body of rules adapted to a particular condition of things, which is to continue for a short season: others, that it is appointed arbitrarily by the will and word of the Almighty, as a test of our obedience, without any reasons of infinite wisdom for his determination. It will be of no use to search out all the false apprehensions of misguided men on this subject, as they arise from the weakness of reason and a criminal ignorance of the heart. They are designed to extenuate the guilt of sin, and remove disquieting fears of conscience.

The word of God gives us the following account of his law: It is holy, just and good; appointed from eternity by infinite wisdom; a rule, arising from the holy nature of God himself and the relations which his creatures bear to him, and to each other; a rule, obligatory on all creatures in all conditions of existence, on angels and on men, both in their innocent and fallen state: Also that its holy nature and leading precepts will never be changed. The earth may pass from its present form, and we are assured it shall, when the elements melt with fervent heat before the coming of the Son of man; but, the law of God shall remain unchanged.

There will for ever be the same reasons for a moral law, as there is at the present time. The Lord, our God, will for ever be worthy of obedience and love; he will, always, have a right to the honour of Creator and Father; creatures will for ever need the support of his wisdom, power and goodness to uphold their being and make them happy; truth, justice, righteousness, faithfulness and brotherly love will be as necessary for glory, in the eternal state, as they are for the happiness of society on earth. The reasons and uses of the divine law, therefore, will for ever remain the same.

Perfect conformity to the moral law will be one means of blessedness and glory in the heavenly state. Intelligent creatures cannot be happy in any society, either here or hereafter, without moral rules for their treatment of each other; and, their felicity will be in proportion to their obedience. As a violation of the moral law bro't misery on mankind; so, those who are redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ, for their deliverance from punishment and reinstatement in a blessed life, must be sanctified unto obedience.—Each of these reflections assures us, that the moral law hath an universal and eternal obligation on creatures. Without a law, they cannot be happy in their dependence on a supreme God, nor in the exercise of the powers he hath given them. Let us reflect on the dignity and au-

thority of the law, which all of us have transgressed. Considered as the will of Almighty God, who is infinitely wise, powerful, good and glorious, it is clothed with awful authority: It is the same, viewed as the rule of duty to him, who upholds us in being; or as it is guarded by eternal penalties, before which the most hardened sinner must tremble. What dignity must there be in a commandment, which is the rule of our duty to the immense family of God in earth and heaven, and both the rule and measure of our happiness, through all the ages to come! How glorious is God in determining that he will magnify his law and make it honourable! What little reason there is to think, he will suffer his commandments to be broken with impunity!!

Sinful men seduce themselves into greater iniquity by thinking, "perhaps the Lord will not be attentive to see: or, if he sees, will not chastise our small neglects, our little transgressions of his commandments; or, if he should chastise, it will be in a small degree, and for a short time."—After we have seen the importance of the commandment for the honour of the lawgiver and the stability of his kingdom, must we not conclude such apprehensions to be falsely grounded, and that they arise, principally, from the fears of a guilty conscience, and a wish to remain quiet in transgression?

Ungodly men have an aversion to the law, on two accounts. They dislike the duties which it commands, and they dread the punishment which it threatens. For each of these reasons, they view it as an enemy, at all events, to be removed. On hearing of God's gracious intention to save the miserable and deliver them from punishment, they are in danger of imagining, that he views his commandment as they do, too strict in its precepts, and too severe in its penalties: Also, that the Saviour hath come to relax the requirements of the law and bring its precepts down to human wishes, so that small sins, as they would call them, are not very displeasing to God; and, that perfect obedience is not now so much a duty, as it was before a dispensation of grace was revealed. Apprehensions, of this kind, are directly contrary to the word of God, and as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, as they are with the strict letter of the law. Tho' it be true, that sinful men are saved by the grace of God, the gospel enjoins a perfect obedience; and, the whole moral law is made a rule of Christian practice. As Christ obeyed the whole moral law, he enjoined on his people to do the same. Our divine Redeemer loved the whole law, and requireth of his people to do the same. We have the express testimony of Christ, which ought to obtain all credit, that the gospel hath not lowered the standard of duty. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." In a verse or two succeeding he saith, "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of the least of these commandments and shall teach men so; shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: But, whosoever, shall

do and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." In sundry passages of the scriptures, the kingdom of heaven, evidently, means the visible Christian kingdom in this world; and, it is generally supposed to be what is meant in this place. Our Lord knew the hearts of sinful men, and their wish that the rule of duty might be relaxed. Having come to declare the grace of God, he foresaw that sinners would wish for salvation, by an abatement of its duties, or an extenuation of its penalties; therefore, he bore an early testimony against the possibility of salvation by either of these means. A relaxation in the rule of duty, is so far from the design and spirit of the gospel, that, whoever shall maintain such an opinion and live accordingly, and teach it to others, thereby seducing them into disobedience, shall be least in the kingdom of heaven. Such an opinion will show that they understand not the gospel, have not its temper, and are not qualified to lead others in the way to eternal life. If this be not a true explanation of our Saviour's words, it is still his express testimony that the gospel hath not abrogated the rule of moral duty, nor made it any more safe for men to transgress wilfully against their own knowledge. That this exposition is agreeable to truth, we learn from the obedience which Christ yielded to the whole law, in his own person. He was so far from rejecting, that he obeyed every precept of the law in the most perfect manner, performed every duty, abstained from every sin, was holy in his whole conversation, and, in all things, honoured the commandment as the word of the Father by whom it was given. He reproved every sin in others, especially, the pharisaic error of that day, that external duty constituted true obedience, in whatever moral state the heart might be. Instead of abridging the commandment, and admitting partial obedience as altogether pleasing to God, never did any other teacher give to the law so broad an extension over the whole man, over all his actions, words and thoughts; even those, which were secreted in the recesses of the heart from the knowledge of every creature. The obedience, which Christ required, was with all the heart, and the whole strength of the mind.

To give strength to his testimony, our Lord died a voluntary and ignominious death on the cross, that he might magnify the law and make it honourable. Such were the counsels of the Father and the Son, that no sinner could be saved, or the guilt of any transgression remitted, until the dishonour done to the commandment was removed, through the shedding of blood. Costly sacrifice! an infinite price indeed! But, it was of such importance, the law should be maintained in all its obligation on the hearts and lives of men, in all its spirituality, all its dignity; yea, in all its penalties, that no sinner could be released from the pains of eternal death, until the beloved of the Lord had suffered and died, thereby restoring the honour of the commandment.

It finally determines the point, when we find the whole law of moral virtue appointed as the

rule for a Christian life. To be the disciples of Christ, we must "love the Lord our God with all the heart, with all the strength and with all the mind; also, we must love our neighbour as ourselves." Christ himself tells us these two commandments contain all the law and the prophets. They are a summary of the divine commands and of the creature's duty; a concise description of the temper and practice in heaven, where all the holy are perfect as he is perfect.—There is a glorious harmony between the holy law, which condemns sinners, and the gospel, which saves all who have repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. No inconsistency, no clashing of interests appears between these two dispensations, in the divine government of men. Both give the same description of God's character, and the principles of his government: They require the same holiness in creatures; the same duties of worship, praise, submission, purity, truth, justice and love.—They agree in assuring us, that without holiness no man can see God, or be prepared for his blessed presence.

It may be inquired, why then ought the gospel to be so precious to us? For the most weighty reasons! It opens the only door of hope for guilty sinners; the only way for the remission of sin, and deliverance from the punishment of eternal death. But the gospel doth not this by changing the nature either of sin or holiness; nor by rendering sin less evil, either in itself, or in the view of a holy God, nor by relaxing the obligation of the commandment, or by accommodating Christian holiness to the works of a depraved heart. Each of these would be inconsistent with the infinite moral purity of the lawgiver and Redeemer. The gospel saves men by furnishing a righteousness through which they may be forgiven, and justified from the guilt of sin, whereby they will be freed from its punishment; and, by recovering them to that holy temper, which the law requires.

Whenever any one hath truly become a subject of the forgiving grace of God, he adores the lawgiver, loves the law, chooses it as the rule of his duty, and is most happy when his obedience is most perfect. All, who imagine a faith in Christ, which is not in its nature holy, is unto salvation; or, that the gospel, doth in any way lower the moral requirements of God from his creatures; or, that sin is a less evil by reason of divine grace, must be called by the judgment of Christ himself, "the least in the kingdom of heaven." They have fallen into the dangerous sentiment, which the apostle condemned: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" To which question he answered, "God forbid! how shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"—How solemn is the obligation on Christians to live in all holy conversation and godliness!—Of all persons, Christians ought to be most afraid of sinning. Sin dishonours him, who created them; crucifies Jesus Christ afresh, and puts him to open shame in the house of his friends: It is directly contrary,

both to the unchangeable laws of God, and to the doctrines, precepts and dispensation of grace, through which they hope to be saved: It is a transgression of their own solemn engagement to be on the side of the Lord, and grieves the Holy Spirit, by whom alone they can be sealed to the day of redemption. If it be an evil thing to sin against a glorious Creator, how much more agravated, to dishonour him, who hath bought us with a price, even his most precious blood? Those, who, by the pains of repentance, have tasted the bitterness of sin, should watch and pray, lest, by some backsliding they pierce their own souls with many sorrows; lest, by some word or action, which Christ hath forbidden, they show themselves to be unworthy of his kingdom. Very unreasonable are those persons, who claim a right to hope through the redemption offered in the gospel, at the same time, living in disobedience to the law, which our Redeemer said should not fail, though the heavens and the earth pass away. This law, the Son of God most perfectly obeyed when he lived in the world, and died to make it honourable. Between the professed hopes and the lives of transgressing Christians there is an irreconcileable contradiction.—Reader, if thou art convinced that holiness is necessary to see God in peace, apply daily to our divine Redeemer for grace, that you may live worthily and keep all his commandments.—There can be no other evidence to men of your being one of his children; nor is there any other Christian comfort, so much to be desired, as that which arises from uniform obedience.

L.

On Goodness of Heart.

GEORGE is one of the finest tempered youths within the circle of my acquaintance. He has all the qualities which constitute in the fullest extent, what the world calls goodness of heart. A disposition uniformly pleasant, a peaceful temper which yields rather than contend, even when he is ungenerously crouded, commiseration for the suffering, and cheerfulness in obliging others, are prominent features in his character.

With all the peculiarities distinguishing her sex in the softer accomplishments, Emilia, the sister of George, is like her brother.

They were both educated by godly parents, who were noted for their Christian meekness and humility, that ornament which in the view of infinite wisdom is of great price. Whether any extraordinary mildness of natural temper distinguished these from others, who have proved less susceptible of a good education, or whether their parents have proved more uniform in their endeavours than others, more consistent in their instructions and examples, more faithful, we shall not enquire. Suffice it to observe, that the instructions of these pious parents, accompanied by their examples, the expressions of unfeigned piety in their most familiar intercourse, had an effectual influence on their son and daugh-

ter. They appeared to be insensibly led to approve and copy the expressions of a temper, that spake incessantly in the conduct of their parents.

Such is the tenderness of Emilia's feelings, that the smallest expression of cruelty toward any creature, awakens her sympathy, and the least neglect of the feelings of others she is careful to check, observing with her peculiar mildness, when any are carelessly wounded, let us be careful to hurt no one. Although her parents are by no means forgetful of the necessities of the poor, they find a faithful remembrancer in their daughter. Frequently does she remind them of particular instances of poverty and want, and rejoices to bear the gift of charity, and gladden the heart of the needy. If inadvertently she gives offence to any, it wounds her to the quick, and with sincere regret, she confesses her fault. It gives her the greatest distress to incur the displeasure of her parents, nor has she any rest until with tears she acknowledge her fault, and reconcile them.

These children, (for such they are still to be considered, the one being only fourteen and the other twelve years old) are said by all their acquaintance to possess singular goodness of heart. So amiable and engaging is their deportment, that they have gained universal esteem. They are respected and beloved by all who know them. Considering the improvement of their minds as well as morals, they are supposed to possess every qualification that can ennoble the human heart.

The parents however have views that are different. While they are diligent to cultivate the minds and morals of their son and daughter, and cautiously guard against every thing that may impede their progress in learning and good behaviour, they know that these are only outward improvements made by human efforts, and that an influence on the inner man renewing the heart, which is the work of God alone, is needful. With gratitude to God, they acknowledge his kindness, in the success he hath given to their labours with their children, and in the restraining influence of his grace upon them. They enjoy comfort in their improvement, and behold their progress with pleasure under the care they receive. Yet they are aware that the greatest improvement of their minds, and the most excellent deportment, are far from constituting that goodness of heart which alone is acceptable to God, and is needful above all things. The necessity of renewal of heart they uniformly impress upon the minds of their children, and cease not to pray for the blessing.

An opportunity to enforce the interesting truth offered after their morning family devotions, and was improved by the father. To interest, as much as possible, the attention of all the family in the exercise of worship, it is the custom of the father to furnish, all that are able to read, with bibles, and to request each of the domestic circle to read a portion of the scripture, that is to be read in their devotions. The tenth chapter of the gospel

of Mark was read. The attention of George was attracted by the account of the young ruler, anxiously enquiring what he should do that he might inherit eternal life. The disappointment of the enquirer, his sadness and grief, awoke the sympathy of George as he read the account. After the family had all retired to their business, leaving the father with his children alone in the room, the bible was taken up again and opened by George at the chapter which had been read. He read again the account which had attracted his attention, and observed to his father, 'Sir, was not this a good 'man? He believed in the Sav-'iour, he must have been very 'watchful and diligent in his 'duties, so that he had observed 'the commandments from his 'youth, and so upright, in all 'things, that the Saviour loved 'him?' You misunderstand the account, my son, replied the father. He did not believe in the Saviour according to his true character, nor had he in spirit and in truth kept all the commandments, nor did our Lord love him because he considered his obedience perfect, or in any wise deserving the divine favour. He was a polite Pharisee whose natural temper was amiable, and, being a ruler among the Jews, as mentioned by the evangelist Luke, he might be a useful man in his station, were his principles and conversation correct. The term, *Good Master*, in his address, was only an expression of complaisance. According to the custom of those times, it was used out of respect to Teachers, and signified no more than, Sir, Doctor, your Excellency, &c. He had been taught to consider an outward observance of the law a perfect fulfilment of its precepts, and therefore supposed *himself* that he had kept them all according to the divine will, because his outward conduct was blameless. And as our Lord possessed all the innocent feelings of humanity, he loved him for his natural amiableness of temper, and the sincerity of his enquiry. Read the account, keeping in view these considerations, and you will observe the wisdom and kindness of the Saviour in directing his reply to the correction of his errors. His conversation is founded on the words of the young ruler, and he endeavours to lead him to a true knowledge of God, and his own heart. The title, *Good Master*, applied to the Saviour was very appropriate; but our Lord knew it was used ignorantly, and without any design to acknowledge his divinity; and that the enquirer had no correct thoughts even of the supreme and spiritual goodness of God, he therefore observed in reply, '*Why 'callest thou me good? There is 'none good but one, that is God.*' As if he had said, you apply the title good without considering the justness of the application; remember it is applicable in the true sense of the word to him alone who is God. God is supremely, is infinitely good. Having thus called his attention to the goodness, the glory of God, the giver of eternal life, and to the law by which this Pharisee hoped for life, he next attends to his error in hoping for righteousness and eternal life, by the law. The young man's enquiry was,

thority of the law, which all of us have transgressed. Considered as the will of Almighty God, who is infinitely wise, powerful, good and glorious, it is clothed with awful authority: It is the same, viewed as the rule of duty to him, who upholds us in being; or as it is guarded by eternal penalties, before which the most hardened sinner must tremble. What dignity must there be in a commandment, which is the rule of our duty to the immense family of God in earth and heaven, and both the rule and measure of our happiness, through all the ages to come! How glorious is God in determining that he will magnify his law and make it honourable! What little reason there is to think, he will suffer his commandments to be broken with impunity!!

Sinful men seduce themselves into greater iniquity by thinking, "perhaps the Lord will not be attentive to see: or, if he sees, will not chastise our small neglects, our little transgressions of his commandments; or, if he should chastise, it will be in a small degree, and for a short time."—After we have seen the importance of the commandment for the honour of the lawgiver and the stability of his kingdom, must we not conclude such apprehensions to be falsely grounded, and that they arise, principally, from the fears of a guilty conscience, and a wish to remain quiet in transgression?

Ungodly men have an aversion to the law, on two accounts. They dislike the duties which it commands, and they dread the punishment which it threatens. For each of these reasons, they view it as an enemy, at all events, to be removed. On hearing of God's gracious intention to save the miserable and deliver them from punishment, they are in danger of imagining, that he views his commandment as they do, too strict in its precepts, and too severe in its penalties: Also, that the Saviour hath come to relax the requirements of the law and bring its precepts down to human wishes, so that small sins, as they would call them, are not very displeasing to God; and, that perfect obedience is not now so much a duty, as it was before a dispensation of grace was revealed. Apprehensions, of this kind, are directly contrary to the word of God, and as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, as they are with the strict letter of the law. Tho' it be true, that sinful men are saved by the grace of God, the gospel enjoins a perfect obedience; and, the whole moral law is made a rule of Christian practice. As Christ obeyed the whole moral law, he enjoined on his people to do the same. Our divine Redeemer loved the whole law, and requireth of his people to do the same. We have the express testimony of Christ, which ought to obtain all credit, that the gospel hath not lowered the standard of duty. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." In a verse or two succeeding he saith, "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of the least of these commandments and shall teach men so; shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: But, whosoever, shall

do and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." In sundry passages of the scriptures, the kingdom of heaven, evidently, means the visible Christian kingdom in this world; and, it is generally supposed to be what is meant in this place. Our Lord knew the hearts of sinful men, and their wish that the rule of duty might be relaxed. Having come to declare the grace of God, he foresaw that sinners would wish for salvation, by an abatement of its duties, or an extenuation of its penalties; therefore, he bore an early testimony against the possibility of salvation by either of these means. A relaxation in the rule of duty, is so far from the design and spirit of the gospel, that, whoever shall maintain such an opinion and live accordingly, and teach it to others, thereby seducing them into disobedience, shall be least in the kingdom of heaven. Such an opinion will show that they understand not the gospel, have not its temper, and are not qualified to lead others in the way to eternal life. If this be not a true explanation of our Saviour's words, it is still his express testimony that the gospel hath not abrogated the rule of moral duty, nor made it any more safe for men to transgress wilfully against their own knowledge. That this exposition is agreeable to truth, we learn from the obedience which Christ yielded to the whole law, in his own person. He was so far from rejecting, that he obeyed every precept of the law in the most perfect manner, performed every duty, abstained from every sin, was holy in his whole conversation, and, in all things, honoured the commandment as the word of the Father by whom it was given. He reproved every sin in others, especially, the pharisaic error of that day, that external duty constituted true obedience, in whatever moral state the heart might be. Instead of abridging the commandment, and admitting partial obedience as altogether pleasing to God, never did any other teacher give to the law so broad an extension over the whole man, over all his actions, words and thoughts; even those, which were secreted in the recesses of the heart from the knowledge of every creature. The obedience, which Christ required, was with all the heart, and the whole strength of the mind.

To give strength to his testimony, our Lord died a voluntary and ignominious death on the cross, that he might magnify the law and make it honourable. Such were the counsels of the Father and the Son, that no sinner could be saved, or the guilt of any transgression remitted, until the dishonour done to the commandment was removed, through the shedding of blood. Costly sacrifice! an infinite price indeed! But, it was of such importance, the law should be maintained in all its obligation on the hearts and lives of men, in all its spirituality, all its dignity; yea, in all its penalties, that no sinner could be released from the pains of eternal death, until the beloved of the Lord had suffered and died, thereby restoring the honour of the commandment.

It finally determines the point, when we find the whole law of moral virtue appointed as the

rule for a Christian life. To be the disciples of Christ, we must "love the Lord our God with all the heart, with all the strength and with all the mind; also, we must love our neighbour as ourselves." Christ himself tells us these two commandments contain all the law and the prophets. They are a summary of the divine commands and of the creature's duty; a concise description of the temper and practice in heaven, where all the holy are perfect as he is perfect.—There is a glorious harmony between the holy law, which condemns sinners, and the gospel, which saves all who have repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. No inconsistency, no clashing of interests appears between these two dispensations, in the divine government of men. Both give the same description of God's character, and the principles of his government: They require the same holiness in creatures; the same duties of worship, praise, submission, purity, truth, justice and love.—They agree in assuring us, that without holiness no man can see God, or be prepared for his blessed presence.

It may be inquired, why then ought the gospel to be so precious to us? For the most weighty reasons! It opens the only door of hope for guilty sinners; the only way for the remission of sin, and deliverance from the punishment of eternal death. But the gospel doth not this by changing the nature either of sin or holiness; nor by rendering sin less evil, either in itself, or in the view of a holy God, nor by relaxing the obligation of the commandment, or by accommodating Christian holiness to the works of a depraved heart. Each of these would be inconsistent with the infinite moral purity of the lawgiver and Redeemer. The gospel saves men by furnishing a righteousness through which they may be forgiven, and justified from the guilt of sin, whereby they will be freed from its punishment; and, by recovering them to that holy temper, which the law requires.

Whenever any one hath truly become a subject of the forgiving grace of God, he adores the lawgiver, loves the law, chooses it as the rule of his duty, and is most happy when his obedience is most perfect. All, who imagine a faith in Christ, which is not in its nature holy, is unto salvation; or, that the gospel, doth in any way lower the moral requirements of God from his creatures; or, that sin is a less evil by reason of divine grace, must be called by the judgment of Christ himself, "the least in the kingdom of heaven." They have fallen into the dangerous sentiment, which the apostle condemned: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" To which question he answered, "God forbid! how shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"—How solemn is the obligation on Christians to live in all holy conversation and godliness!—Of all persons, Christians ought to be most afraid of sinning. Sin dishonours him, who created them; crucifies Jesus Christ afresh, and puts him to open shame in the house of his friends: It is directly contrary,

both to the unchangeable laws of God, and to the doctrines, precepts and dispensation of grace, through which they hope to be saved: It is a transgression of their own solemn engagement to be on the side of the Lord, and grieves the Holy Spirit, by whom alone they can be sealed to the day of redemption. If it be an evil thing to sin against a glorious Creator, how much more agravated, to dishonour him, who hath bought us with a price, even his most precious blood? Those, who, by the pains of repentance, have tasted the bitterness of sin, should watch and pray, lest, by some backsliding they pierce their own souls with many sorrows; lest, by some word or action, which Christ hath forbidden, they show themselves to be unworthy of his kingdom. Very unreasonable are those persons, who claim a right to hope through the redemption offered in the gospel, at the same time, living in disobedience to the law, which our Redeemer said should not fail, though the heavens and the earth pass away. This law, the Son of God most perfectly obeyed when he lived in the world, and died to make it honourable. Between the professed hopes and the lives of transgressing Christians there is an irreconcileable contradiction.—Reader, if thou art convinced that holiness is necessary to see God in peace, apply daily to our divine Redeemer for grace, that you may live worthily and keep all his commandments.—There can be no other evidence to men of your being one of his children; nor is there any other Christian comfort, so much to be desired, as that which arises from uniform obedience.

L.

On Goodness of Heart.

GEORGE is one of the finest tempered youths within the circle of my acquaintance. He has all the qualities which constitute in the fullest extent, what the world calls goodness of heart. A disposition uniformly pleasant, a peaceful temper which yields rather than contend, even when he is ungenerously crouded, commiseration for the suffering, and cheerfulness in obliging others, are prominent features in his character.

With all the peculiarities distinguishing her sex in the softer accomplishments, Emilia, the sister of George, is like her brother.

They were both educated by godly parents, who were noted for their Christian meekness and humility, that ornament which in the view of infinite wisdom is of great price. Whether any extraordinary mildness of natural temper distinguished these from others, who have proved less susceptible of a good education, or whether their parents have proved more uniform in their endeavours than others, more consistent in their instructions and examples, more faithful, we shall not enquire. Suffice it to observe, that the instructions of these pious parents, accompanied by their examples, the expressions of unfeigned piety in their most familiar intercourse, had an effectual influence on their son and daugh-

ter. They appeared to be insensibly led to approve and copy the expressions of a temper, that spake incessantly in the conduct of their parents.

Such is the tenderness of Emilia's feelings, that the smallest expression of cruelty toward any creature, awakens her sympathy, and the least neglect of the feelings of others she is careful to check, observing with her peculiar mildness, when any are carelessly wounded, let us be careful to hurt no one. Although her parents are by no means forgetful of the necessities of the poor, they find a faithful remembrancer in their daughter. Frequently does she remind them of particular instances of poverty and want, and rejoices to bear the gift of charity, and gladden the heart of the needy. If inadvertently she gives offence to any, it wounds her to the quick, and with sincere regret, she confesses her fault. It gives her the greatest distress to incur the displeasure of her parents, nor has she any rest until with tears she acknowledge her fault, and reconcile them.

These children, (for such they are still to be considered, the one being only fourteen and the other twelve years old) are said by all their acquaintance to possess singular goodness of heart. So amiable and engaging is their deportment, that they have gained universal esteem. They are respected and beloved by all who know them. Considering the improvement of their minds as well as morals, they are supposed to possess every qualification that can ennoble the human heart.

The parents however have views that are different. While they are diligent to cultivate the minds and morals of their son and daughter, and cautiously guard against every thing that may impede their progress in learning and good behaviour, they know that these are only outward improvements made by human efforts, and that an influence on the inner man renewing the heart, which is the work of God alone, is needful. With gratitude to God, they acknowledge his kindness, in the success he hath given to their labours with their children, and in the restraining influence of his grace upon them. They enjoy comfort in their improvement, and behold their progress with pleasure under the care they receive. Yet they are aware that the greatest improvement of their minds, and the most excellent deportment, are far from constituting that goodness of heart which alone is acceptable to God, and is needful above all things. The necessity of renewal of heart they uniformly impress upon the minds of their children, and cease not to pray for the blessing.

An opportunity to enforce the interesting truth offered after their morning family devotions, and was improved by the father. To interest, as much as possible, the attention of all the family in the exercise of worship, it is the custom of the father to furnish, all that are able to read, with bibles, and to request each of the domestic circle to read a portion of the scripture, that is to be read in their devotions. The tenth chapter of the gospel

of Mark was read. The attention of George was attracted by the account of the young ruler, anxiously enquiring what he should do that he might inherit eternal life. The disappointment of the enquirer, his sadness and grief, awoke the sympathy of George as he read the account. After the family had all retired to their business, leaving the father with his children alone in the room, the bible was taken up again and opened by George at the chapter which had been read. He read again the account which had attracted his attention, and observed to his father, 'Sir, was not this a good 'man? He believed in the Sav-'iour, he must have been very 'watchful and diligent in his 'duties, so that he had observed 'the commandments from his 'youth, and so upright, in all 'things, that the Saviour loved 'him?' You misunderstand the account, my son, replied the father. He did not believe in the Saviour according to his true character, nor had he in spirit and in truth kept all the commandments, nor did our Lord love him because he considered his obedience perfect, or in any wise deserving the divine favour. He was a polite Pharisee whose natural temper was amiable, and, being a ruler among the Jews, as mentioned by the evangelist Luke, he might be a useful man in his station, were his principles and conversation correct. The term, *Good Master*, in his address, was only an expression of complaisance. According to the custom of those times, it was used out of respect to Teachers, and signified no more than, Sir, Doctor, your Excellency, &c. He had been taught to consider an outward observance of the law a perfect fulfilment of its precepts, and therefore supposed *himself* that he had kept them all according to the divine will, because his outward conduct was blameless. And as our Lord possessed all the innocent feelings of humanity, he loved him for his natural amiableness of temper, and the sincerity of his enquiry. Read the account, keeping in view these considerations, and you will observe the wisdom and kindness of the Saviour in directing his reply to the correction of his errors. His conversation is founded on the words of the young ruler, and he endeavours to lead him to a true knowledge of God, and his own heart. The title, *Good Master*, applied to the Saviour was very appropriate; but our Lord knew it was used ignorantly, and without any design to acknowledge his divinity; and that the enquirer had no correct thoughts even of the supreme and spiritual goodness of God, he therefore observed in reply, '*Why* '*callest thou me good? There is* '*none good but one, that is God.*' As if he had said, you apply the title good without considering the justness of the application; remember it is applicable in the true sense of the word to him alone who is God. God is supremely, is infinitely good. Having thus called his attention to the goodness, the glory of God, the giver of eternal life, and to the law by which this Pharisee hoped for life, he next attends to his error in hoping for righteousness and eternal life, by the law. The young man's enquiry was,

'What shall *I do?*' He wished to make some extraordinary exertions, to perform some work of distinguished merit, by which he might lay the foundation of a claim to eternal life. This is strikingly intimated in the words of his enquiry as expressed by the evangelist Matthew, '*What 'good thing shall I do?*' What shall I add to all my meritorious conduct? To this the Saviour replied, '*Thou knowest the com-'mandments: Do not commit 'adultery,*' &c. Observe, the import of the reply thus connected with the enquiry is this, There is but one rule of *doing*, but one law of works, viz. the moral law given by Moses, styled by way of emphasis, the commandments, if you are desirous to obtain eternal life by your works, and suppose it is in your power to merit the desired blessing, you must go to the commandments; and make the trial. Keep these with the remembrance of the spiritual and infinite goodness of God. In the answer of the young man to this direction you see the Pharisee, and how well the Saviour knew his heart, when he directed him to the law. '*Master, all these have I 'observed from my youth?*' Trusting in the outward observance of the law, he felt confident of safety, and replied *boasting* much like him that said, '*I fast twice 'in the week.*' This glorying in what he had done appears more striking, if you consider the additional words, omitted by Mark, and mentioned by Matthew, '*What lack I yet?*' To convince him of his error, and to shew that by the very first commandment in the decalogue he was condemned, that he had other gods before him instead of the true God, even his riches, our Lord informs him of one great defect, requesting him to make a sacrifice, and exercise a self-denial, which in that state of his church was necessary, and was readily made and exercised by them that were his. '*He 'said unto him, one thing thou 'lackest, go thy way, sell whatso-'ever thou hast and give to the 'poor, and thou shalt have trea-'sure in heaven: and come take 'up the cross, and follow me.*' This afforded an opportunity to discover the nature of his obedience, whether it flowed from supreme love to God or not. If he could not submit to these terms, it was evident he regarded his possessions more than the authority and favour of God, more than eternal life. And what was his reply? Sadness and grief of heart. The terms were too hard for him, '*for he had 'great possessions.*' Although his mind was filled with anxiety on the subject of eternal life, his love of riches exceeded all. Now the character of this young man appears in its true light. By the answers of our Lord, he was led on, and discovered to be ignorant of God and the Saviour, ignorant of the spiritual nature of the divine law, and of his own heart; and under the influence of that love of the world which is enmity with God. All his seeming goodness was only outward. Pride and sordid self-love lurked under all his natural amiableness of temper. And, my dear children, continued the father, with a heart full of concern for their souls, and with his eyes in tears, lest they should mistake their dutiful conduct

and blamless lives for true goodness of heart, my dear children, be on your guard against this fatal mistake. There are many who, like this young man, rest upon their own supposed righteousness for acceptance with God, and are dreadfully disappointed when they are rewarded according to their deeds. None are more exposed to this danger, than they whose lives are outwardly moral, and blameless in the sight of the world. They are praised by men, and through that natural pride of our evil hearts, which leads us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, they suppose themselves deserving praise even from God. I thank God, that by his restraints, you are dutiful and moral in your conduct. It affords me comfort to see it; but unspeakably greater would be my comfort, if there were a good hope that your hearts were right with God. If all your dutiful conduct and moral lives, flow from no higher principle than to please myself and your mother, and to enjoy the esteem of your friends and acquaintance, you are in the same condition with this young man you read of; you lack one thing, and one very important thing, a heart regarding God as you should, a new heart. A desire to please your parents, by your dutiful conduct, is commendable, and does afford us pleasure; and to regard the esteem of those around you is highly proper: to feel otherwise would be sinful; but remember, God is to be loved above all, his will is to be regarded before any other, and his favour to be sought, though you should lose the favour of your nearest friends by seeking it. We must love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and strength. In every duty, and in every indulgence we must have respect to God's will and favour. What an addition would it be to your happiness, to feel this in all your ways! How would it heighten your enjoyment! My heart feels anxious for it above all things, and, on your own account as well as mine, I cease not to pray for the blessing upon you.

The children were much affected with this seasonable and affectionate counsel. The father left them in tears, and retired to his room to implore the blessing of God upon them.

A.

How old art thou?

THE following piece was written for the month of January, but not received in time for publication. Events are continually happening, which render it proper to consider the question, How old art thou?

Ed.

Reflections suggested by the question of Pharaoh to Jacob:—
"And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?"

THE history of Jacob is full of instruction. It is a striking representation of human life. The variety of changes, prosperous and adverse, through which he passed, gives an affecting view of the condition of man in this transitory state. To the question propo-

sed by Pharaoh, he answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." Jacob was in every sense a pilgrim and a sojourner in this world. —At an early age he was driven, by the unnatural hatred of his brother, from his father's house. From that period to the day of his death, he had no settled habitation. This exhibits the real state of all mankind in this passing world. It is at best but a temporary habitation which they have, and their possession is very short. This or that field they call theirs; on this or that object they set their mark as their property: but to-morrow, and these will pass from their possession into the hands of another; and the places which now know them, will know them no more. The condition of man, in this life, very much resembles that of the ancient Patriarchs who wandered, from place to place, with their flocks and herds. They tarried only while subsistence was easy; and when the season was over, they struck their tents and disappeared. It is the lot of man thus to sojourn in this changing world. Every year, and month, and day, vast numbers of our race strike their tents, and depart to another country.

But some are pilgrims in a different sense. Of this number was Jacob. He not only had no abiding city here, but he *lived* as seeking "a better country, that is, an heavenly." —"By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God."

Jacob, in the course of his wanderings, went down into Egypt. It was a mysterious chain of events in divine providence which carried him there. Those events as means, were necessary to bring about the end designed. If Jacob had not made a coat of many colours for his favourite Joseph—if the youth had not dreamed, and declared those dreams which excited the jealousy and hatred of his brethren, if Joseph had not been sent to enquire after their health, if he had not been sold to the Midianitish merchants, and if numberless other events, in themselves inconsiderable, had not taken place, Jacob would never have gone to Egypt. All these events were under the immediate direction of the Most High, who meant them for good. Thus, the policy of the extensive kingdom of Egypt was made subservient to the salvation of Jacob and his household. No less concerned is the holy and wise providence of God in the circumstances of the life and death of all his creatures. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." The providence of God towards Jacob, is a comment upon this and similar declarations of his word. That part of his history, especially, which is the subject of these reflections, appears to be one of

the most conclusive evidences that can possibly be given, of the immediate and constant agency of divine providence in the events of this world. As we trace the agency of a holy and wise providence in this wonderful chain of events, we at length find the venerable old man in the presence of Pharaoh. The king was struck with his aged and venerable appearance. He makes the emphatical enquiry, "How old art thou?" The estimate of Jacob upon the shortness of life, and the unsatisfying nature of earthly enjoyments, is very evident from his answer: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my pilgrimage been."

Reader, into whose hands these reflections may come, let the question be put to you; "How old art thou?" Uncommon as this question may seem, it will sometimes intrude, especially at the commencement of a new year. Here and there one, into whose hands this may come, might answer, "I am sixty, or I am seventy." And some, who have hardly begun to think of being old, are on the borders of fifty. You have lived in God's world, and upon his bounties. *half a century.* This seems a long period to the young, who look upon you as an old man. How does it seem to you?—"A vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." It is a dream. Here and there an event you can call to recollection, but the greatest part of the past is, to your remembrance, as though it had not been. Of that which you can remember, how much of it hath been filled with trials and disappointments. Let me repeat the annals of your life; "Such a year was visited with distressing sickness; at such a time, buried a beloved parent, a dear companion, a child, a brother, a sister or a friend. My succeeding time hath been in the pursuit of something which I never obtained, and at fifty, I am unsatisfied. Alas, how life passes! The phantoms of time have cheated me of fifty years, and I have almost done with the world, before I have begun to realize an existence in it."

Fathers, it is time to reflect! Some who may read this, I trust, have already reflected to a good purpose; and are enabled, with a just estimate upon human life, to say, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my pilgrimage been." Sensible of the unsatisfying and transitory nature of sublunary enjoyments, you have sought and become interested in that "city whose builder and maker is God." Happy will you be, when flesh and heart shall fail you, to be received into everlasting habitations.

But are there not some, who have arrived to the periods just mentioned, surprised to find themselves in old age, and without a Christian hope? If the kingdom of heaven is not now begun in your hearts, you have reason to fear it never will be. The question, emphatical to you, again returns, "How old art thou?" What, fifty, sixty, seventy! and have you neglected religion so long? I dare not say you will never be the subjects of grace, but I tremble for you. There is indeed, to you, an accepted time and a day of salvation, but it is short. The

taper of your life hath burned almost to its socket, and that which is to come will appear vastly more fleeting than the past. This year thou mayest die. It is then high time to secure a better country. But it is probably your calamity, as well as your sin, that you are now, if possible, more disposed to put off the great work of repentance than in youth. But remember that with you, it is the eleventh, the last hour.

Of those who are in the midst of life, let the enquiry also be made, "How old art thou?" I am thirty, or I am forty. But we are so involved in the cares and business of life, that we cannot attend to such questions. Some twenty years hence we will give you an answer. We have as much as we can possibly attend to already. Let religion be the employment of old age. We have not yet done with this, it is, therefore, needless to seek another country. Let the question be proposed when we are more at leisure. But are there none who are disposed to stop in the midst of life, to consider their ways and be wise? Yes, to the honour of divine grace, the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches have not wholly choked the word. All-powerful grace has prevailed even in this period.

To the youthful reader let this question be repeated. Should the answer be fifteen or twenty, permit me to remind you that thousands who were younger than you, are in the land of silence. More than one half of your fellow creatures never live to your age. If you are not too young to die, you are not too young to be the disciples of Christ, and to answer this question with triumph in expectation of a better country. O, remember your Creator in the days of your youth! The frequency of this topic cannot render it unimportant. It is as interesting to you as it was to those youth who have gone to render their account to their God. O, forget not that you must die, that you must appear in judgment, and that a miserable eternity awaits the impenitent. Forget not that your life is a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Sin has put a false coloring upon the objects of sense, beware that they do not deceive you! Should twenty years be added to your life, and you should then die impenitent, the weight of twenty years' guilt would only sink you deeper in despair. You wish to live; but is it to live in sin? It were better to have died the past year than to live to die a sinner the next. Better, never to have heard the congratulations of a new year, than to be punished for the misimprovement of it. My dear youth, I know not how to leave you, without evidence that, if God spares your life this year, you will devote it to his service. Will you not devote one year to God? Must the Saviour always be put off, when he calls, to a future period? Reflect upon this subject a moment. Is heaven an object unworthy your pursuit? Are the friendship of the great God and the everlasting love of the Saviour not worth the service of a year? O, be wise, and consider in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace.

NICANOR.

Necessity of a Revelation.

WERE a traveller lost in an unexplored forest, shrouded in the gloom, which the thick shade of the trees produced; were he unable to discover any light except a few rays, reflected from the small portions of sky left unveiled by the leaves; he would deeply realize the necessity of a brighter light to mark the way leading to his destined home. But while a full blaze of light surrounds him; while his path is hard beaten by the many travellers, which have passed before him, he neither will nor can realize the value of these advantages.

Here is a picture of our present situation. We have the law, which teaches our duty, but which alone would leave us in despair. We have also the gospel, which shines with a clearer light. It is not only a lamp, enlightening our path, but *a voice, saying, this is the way: Walk ye therein.* In this situation we are not disposed to enquire for the fountain, whence these blessings emanate. We consider them matters of course, of which we cannot be deprived without injustice. Nor is it possible we should now realize the vast importance of revelation. To the mind, accustomed to stretch its pinions beyond the veil which divides time from eternity, the light of nature destroys total darkness; but it is only to render the gloom more awful, the shade more dismal, uncertainty more dreadful, and our blindness more apparent. Thus situated were Plato and Socrates; to whom reflection discovered the necessity of a revelation, but could carry them no farther. To them the prospects of futurity were gloomy and uncertain. Though they believed in a future existence, yet their ideas of its nature, fell far short of those revealed in the book of life. By reason, we have a glimpse of the existence and character of God, our own immortality, and of our lost situation by sin. Here we stop. No pleasing voice invites us to pardon and acceptance with God. Uninspired with a well grounded hope, and unable to rest in uncertainty, we take refuge in despair. Restless in our natures, panting for happiness, and grasping at every appearance of pleasure, we are constantly subject to disappointment, perplexity and self-accusation; and without an unerring rule of conduct, in which we have implicit confidence, we must be for ever fearful, for ever unhappy. Like a man, suspended in the air by an invisible support, we are momently expecting our fall; but revelation points to a source of confidence, the God of heaven, the ruler of all things. Founded on him, *though the elements melt with fervent heat; the earth, and all terrestrial objects be dissolved,* we are secure, we are fearless.

The practice of men is regulated by their principles; and both have an undeniable influence upon their happiness. Fortunately we are able to trace the paths, to which the light of nature has directed, though they are as diverse as their travellers, and marked only by an individual track. While we learn their principles, we are astonished at their folly, and reluctantly ac-

knowledge this the acme of human wisdom.

Among all the ancient philosophers, no two are found, whose sentiments, upon the most important points, were settled and coincident. While Socrates and Plato taught the existence of one God, they worshipped many. Plutarch and Cicero, with the same sources of information, acknowledged two supreme deities; an author of good and an author of evil. The sublime idea of bringing good out of evil, order out of confusion, was too great for their conception. While the benevolent Jesus could forgive and pray for enemies, Zeno taught that we ought never to forgive them. Aristippus, Plato, Diogenes, Zeno, and the Cynics were the advocates for lewdness, and the enlightened Cicero pronounced it a crime of little importance. Some taught, that it was as lawful for children to roast and eat their parents as any other food: Others, that parents might sacrifice and eat their children. Lycurgus encouraged stealing by law, and Aristippus pronounced it lawful. Cicero thought the acquisition of fame a sufficient foundation of a lawful war, and taught that virtue consisted in the desire of fame.

Such being the principles, what has been the practice of these philosophers? Cicero says, they neither reformed themselves nor their disciples, in a single instance, and we have other testimony that his philosophy did not lead him to purity of life. We have the assertion of Lucian, that they were "tyrants, adulterers and corrupters of youth." Socrates and Plato were both incontinent, both intemperate. Some were traitors and debauchers: Others committed lewdness, without a blush, in the streets. One was slain in the act of adultery: Another kept a seraglio, and perjured himself to cheat a friend. Xenophon was a sodomite: Cato a drunkard; and many of their most celebrated philosophers, unable to bear the trifling misfortunes of life, destroyed themselves. Such are the natural fruits of this philosophy, and such is the best philosophy, which the wisdom of men, untaught by revelation, could produce.

Is such a course of life productive of happiness? Confidence is the only foundation of solid happiness. Where was their confidence? Uncertain what would be agreeable to their gods, they knew not what to offer; nor were they sure that the satisfaction of one was not offensive to another. If they believed in two deities, the one good, the other evil, one delighting in happiness, the other in misery, the consequence was certain, that misery only could satisfy the latter. Without confidence in God, and taught, by human frailty, the folly of trusting in man, to whom should they; to whom could they go? That they had not this confidence, their writings evidence. So various and discordant were their views on moral subjects, that many of their wisest men declared, they must never expect to arrive at truth, unless taught by a revelation from God.

Was uncertainty the farthest bound which heathenism could reach! What then may be expected from the wisdom of the

deist, and atheist? A little consideration will evince what must necessarily be the practice of infidels. Rejecting the great doctrines, which relate to the eternal world, and which the heathen faintly believed, they were under less restraint, and were consequently more vicious in their lives. Law and order, heaven and hell, they pronounced the mere phantoms of the imagination, which, tho' sometimes useful, were created by the superstitious and designing, to frighten the ignorant, and to subserve their own purposes.—While the heathen restrained some of the grosser irregularities of men, by their belief in visionary gods, and a future immortal existence, they, with a sweeping stroke, have wiped away all restraint, broken up the great deeps of licentiousness, and fed the fiery passions with a seven fold flame. Their steps have been marked with bold impiety against the God of heaven, *in whose hands their breath is, and whose are all their ways.* Does heathenism leave us in uncertainty? This does more. It destroys morality, reputation, and happiness here; it carries us thoughtless to the grave; and we awake, frighted, in the presence of our Judge, the objects of his anger. Most emphatically, therefore, do the principles, and practice of men, who have no revelation, or who are not guided by it, speak its necessity.

The character of God, the immortal nature, and final destination of man, are subjects, the most momentous to us. A knowledge of them, is of more importance to our happiness, than of any, with which we are accquainted. Of God, the heathen entertained three hundred different opinions; and of his character, their ideas were such as the indulgence of their passions demanded. Here then, behold the importance of revelation. By the light of nature, we can learn the existence of a God, but his will is unknown, and cannot possibly be discovered by the powers of reason. But of what avail would it be to know there was a God, without knowing what would please him? By reason, we also discover our immortality. Sure of an eternity of happiness or woe, and yet ignorant of the means, by which the former may be secured, and the latter shunned, what happiness could we enjoy? We see the goodness of God displayed in the works of creation, and providence; ourselves to have been the pensioners of his bounty, and know that we have been ungrateful in the reception of these mercies. Reason would lead us to conclude with Socrates, (whose decisions, on these subjects, were more just than those of any of the heathen,) that God could not forgive sin. Thus, by the light of nature, we are plunged into the world of woe, but, by revelation, we are taught that in Christ is our hope. Had God communicated no revelation of his will to men, the best, and only way of salvation, by which they could be saved, would never have been discovered by them. They must have perished for ever. Faith and repentance, to the eye of reason, would have appeared the most improbable conditions of forgiveness with God, which could possibly have been devised: yet, in the scriptures, these

are made the easy terms, upon a compliance with which, we are promised joy unspeakable in this life, and in the world to come, an inheritance among the saints in light. Every thing, which respects our duty towards God, our fellow-men, or ourselves, is now clearly revealed; and we have confidence in God, that, *though the mountains depart, and the hills be removed, his word shall stand for ever.*

Let it be remembered, that, in the account here given of the heathen, we do not see them wholly destitute of revelation. They had numerous traditions of facts, which are recorded in the Old Testament, and which, no doubt, led them to more correct conclusions on moral subjects, than they would otherwise have formed. We may safely conclude, that, uninfluenced by any thing unseen, society could not exist. But allowing the light of nature all the assistance which tradition affords, and it presents a faint, imperfect semblance of those beauties, which revelation sets in full view before us. "What the natural eye thus sees with dim and probable vision, Christianity, possessed of superior optics, discerns and promises, with clear prophetic certainty. Endless death and endless life are written in full and glowing characters in the book, sealed to unenlightened and unassisted man with seven seals. That book, a hand infinite and supreme unrolls to every humble, penitent, believing mind, and discloses to the enraptured view the page of eternity, on which, things divine and immortal are pencilled with sun-beams. A residence finished with infinite workmanship, employments pure and ravishing, a character completely dignified and lovely, companions the first and best in the universe, a system of Providence, composed wholly of good, refining, ascending, and brightening for ever, and a God seen, known and enjoyed, in all his combined perfections, are there drawn in colors of light and life."* Blush then, ye lovers of darkness, and adore that God, who has revealed the path of life, and invites you to pursue it; the path of death, and warns you to escape it.

S. T. H.

FOR THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

On Rhetorical Profaneness.

"THOU *shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*" The epithet improper is too mild a term, to be

* See two sermons, on Infidel Philosophy, by Dr. Dwight, where most of the facts, mentioned in this essay, are to be found. These sermons connected with a sermon on Infidelity, by ROBERT HALL of Cambridge, (Eng.) and a contrast of the life and death of Dr. Finley, with the life and death of David Hume, in the fourth Number of the first volume of the Christian's Magazine, form a bulwark, which Infidels would assault in vain, were they not aided by the corrupt passions of men. Let no one refuse to read these publications, because he is uninterested in the subject. He will find himself amply rewarded, should he get no religious instruction from them. Though different in kind, they are specimens of eloquence, never surpassed in this or any other age. In them may be seen all that the light of nature and infidelity can do; and most forcibly do they teach the necessity of a revelation.

applied to the frequent exclamatory invocations on the name of the Deity, which grate upon the ear, from the tongues of eloquent speakers, or pain the sight, from the pages of impassioned writers.

From the high veneration in which the rhetorical productions of the ancients are held, seems to have arisen in part, the evil of which I am complaining. Dii Immortales! was the frequent exclamation of the Roman Orator: and, My God! responds the modern Ciceronean, as though no higher reverence, than that paid to the fabled son of Saturn, were due to Jehovah. But an attachment to heathen productions is not the only cause of this irreverence. If attachment to the ancients is acquired only by a perusal of their works, and strengthened in proportion to the degree of attention with which those works are examined, no satisfactory reason can be given, why ancient eloquence should be held in higher estimation by the pulpit orators of France, than by those of England.*

The more efficient cause of profaneness in the pulpit is vanity. "The preacher's oath is rhetoric, and he swears for fame." Vanity so unbecoming a minister of the gospel has, I am persuaded, induced many, through a false taste, to prostitute the name of their Maker in order to support an elevation of style, which elevation, the subject did not require, nor the sentiments allow. Boldness is a characteristic of style, which it is desirable to possess, but which should never be purchased, by a breach of the third command.

Animated discourse may admit indeed of warm ejaculations, or solemn asseverations, in which not only with evident propriety, but with great beauty of style, the name of God may be invoked. In protestation of his sincerity St. Paul calls God for a record upon his soul, and the Psalmist in his prayerful effusions makes frequent use of the name of his Creator. But when a writer or a speaker introduces into his language the exclamations, good God! For God's sake! &c. as mere unmeaning expletives, designed like the oaths of the profane swearer, for no other end, than to give boldness to his expression, and rotundity to his periods, it cannot fail to be regarded, as a high degree of wilful profanation. It is recorded of a truly great man, that he never uttered the glorious and fearful name of God without pausing with reverence. This manner of regarding the name of the Deity, will lead one to more exalted conceptions of his character, and unlike the person who makes a debasing use of the divine titles upon trivial occasions, to discern an important distinction between the names of Jupiter and Jehovah.

B.

* The sermons of Massillon and Bourdaloue, however eloquent, it is conceived, have a tendency, by their frequent appeals to heaven, to lessen in the mind, those ideas of fear and reverence which the Most High so justly requires, of his creatures, and to lower that standard of action which is furnished to us by the contemplation of a Being beyond conception, great and adorable.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

Sir,

THE duty, in which you have engaged, is of high importance for the interest of religion, and the encouragement of experimental piety; at the same time very difficult in the execution. You must expect many temptations to unfaithfulness.—In some instances, you will find it difficult to determine what ought to be approved, and what rejected.

The monthly religious publications, now multiplied in our country, have a great influence in forming, both the opinions and the practice of those who read them; on this account, the responsibility of conducting them is great. It cannot be expected, from any man, or number of men to avoid mistakes, therefore, the greater care ought to be exercised, in the selection of proper matter.——Many periodical publications on religious subjects, in the English language, are printed either in this country or in Europe; the greater part of which I have read. ——These have their characteristic differences, perhaps arising from the different tempers, or different religious experience of the persons by whom they are conducted, or of the parties by whom they are patronized.

What I wish of you, is to avoid all parties, and to be both scriptural and prudent, for although prudence, in the worldly acceptation of the word, doth not always imply gracious affections, it is not to be neglected. Many persons have been destroyed, by stumbling over an imprudent description of the truth.——Great caution ought to be observed in describing Christian experience. To this subject, those, who are anxiously concerned for their own souls, are ever attentive. If you describe Christian experience, in a way, more metaphysical than we find in the word of God, both Satan and the wicked heart, will become reasoners, and in the opinion of ignorant and sinful people, may prove that to be true, which is both heretical and vicious. Or, if you describe it in the loose language of transports, frames, and the first warm conceptions of those, who either are, or think themselves to be Christians, you may lose the essence of unfeigned piety in the vapor of enthusiasm.——It is very common for young converts to relate their Christian experiences in the most glowing language.——They are sincere, but not acquainted with the wiles of Satan, nor with the insidiousness of spiritual pride.——A few years of Christian experience will lay them in deep abasement, through a sense of their own imperfections.—— This reason induced me to bring the matter into your consideration. Young Christians, in the state I have mentioned, imagine their own present views to be the test of all truth; they speak, in the warmth of their hearts; they judge, and approve or condemn, according to their present frames; they write to their friends in the ardor of feeling; their letters are transmitted to you for publication in the Magazine.——Although, many exercises of a renewed heart are

expressed, they are mingled with much imagination, and sometimes written imprudently. Pious friends are delighted with the change in those, for whom they have often prayed, and transmit all their sayings for the public eye.——It is not to be expected, that all who are pious or have had uncommon manifestations of the truth, should be able to write for the edification of the church.——Although a true picture of gracious affections in the heart is desirable, above all other things, some attention is due to the style, and manner of expression.—In many instances, it will not be expedient for an Editor to alter an account of Christian experiences while it is so drawn, as must be disagreeable to every one, who either thinks or writes correctly. In all such cases, propriety must prevail, although the feelings of a few persons may be wounded.

Narratives of revivals of religion, when judiciously composed, are useful, and I hope will be solicited for your Magazine. Being a subscriber, I shall carefully notice the publication, and if it will be agreeable, will give you some further cautions in my future letters.

SENEX.

Letter from Caroline to Maria.

MY DEAR MARIA,

YOU do me the favor to observe in your last letter, that you believe me influenced by a desire to promote your happiness, when I urge upon you the necessity of attending to religion; but you seem to consider yourself too young to renounce the pleasures which appear to you so well calculated for the season of youth, and content yourself with believing, that some years hence will be soon enough to think of this most important of all concerns.

Are you then, Maria, too young to serve the God who made you, who constantly preserves you, and to whom you are accountable for all your conduct?—too young to love the Saviour who suffered and died to redeem sinners like yourself?—too young to secure the happiness of your immortal soul? Are you too young to die? Look back a few years upon the circle of your acquaintance and you will behold many bowing to the "king of terrors," the number of whose years did not equal yours. And when taking this retrospect, reflect upon your beloved brother suddenly taken from you in the bloom of youth. While mourning his death, you appeared to feel the insufficiency of earthly objects to console your afflicted mind, and said to me, as I was standing by you, "O Caroline! this world will never afford me any more satisfaction." I fondly hoped these impressions would be lasting, and would lead you to seek a permanent good; but alas! scarce one year had elapsed before they were, if I may judge from your conduct, wholly effaced from your mind, and you became, gay and thoughtless as ever.

....."Smitten friends
"Are angels sent on errands full of love;
"For us they languish, and for us they die:
"And shall they languish, shall they die in vain?

"Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hov'ring shades,
"Which wait the revolution in our hearts?
"Shall we disdain their silent, soft address;
"Their posthumous advice, and pious prayer?
"Senseless as herds that graze their hallow'd graves,
"Tread under foot their agonies and groans,
"Frustrate their anguish, and destroy their death?"

When those to whom we are tenderly attached are taken from us, when the most endearing ties are dissolved, survivors are loudly called upon to "be also ready." O Maria, do not disregard this friendly monitor. The current of time is imperceptibly wafting you along, and soon, like your brother, you will be carried into the ocean of eternity. *Nothing now separates you from the eternal world, but the brittle thread of life, compared with which, the spider's most attenuated web, is cord—is cable.*"

If it is ever required of us to remember our Creator, it is certainly our duty to consecrate to him the morning of life, the vigor of youth; and to this period he has given a promise, which, if we realized its value, we should be extremely anxious to apply to ourselves, by attending to the condition to which it is annexed. "Those that seek me early, shall find me." Our heavenly Father not only condescends to regard the young in common with others, but grants them peculiar encouragement, by the assurance that if they seek his favor, they *shall* obtain it.

Your principal objection to early piety seems to arise from the idea, that gloom and melancholy are ill suited to persons of your age. And do you think then, my dear friend, that religion consists in gloom and melancholy? View with me, for a moment, though imperfectly drawn, the life of a Christian, and point out to me that part of it which is calculated to deprive you of cheerfulness, or render your youthful days unhappy.

The true believer is reconciled to God, acquiesces in his government, and rejoices to be at his disposal. He humbly hopes through the merits of his Saviour, that his sins are pardoned, and he is relieved from a condemning conscience. He has for his father and friend the great Sovereign of the universe, whose love is infinitely more ardent, whose care infinitely more tender, than that of earthly parents or friends: to him he looks for the supply of his daily returning wants, knowing that the beasts of the forest are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

With a tribute of gratitude he receives the common blessings of life, which are to him greatly enhanced by the consideration that they flow from a fountain of benevolence. Is he exposed to danger? An Almighty protector is near, able to deliver him from the most perilous situation. When bereft of friends, of property, of all which the world calls blessings, he does not cry out, like Micah, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" for his God, his Saviour, his inheritance, still remain, and with sweet submission he exclaims, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the

Lord." View him on a bed of pain, and languishing.

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
"Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
"Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of Heav'n."

Mark his patience, his resignation to his Father's will, his trust in a divine Saviour, his readiness, yea even desire to depart and be with Christ, and tell me, is this gloom, is this melancholy? "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." They have peace with God, peace with the world, and peace with themselves. They have comfort in life, joy in death, and will be unspeakably blessed through eternity.

Be persuaded, my dear Maria, seriously to consider this momentous subject. Cast it not by as one which does not concern you, for in it you are most deeply interested. Do not say with Felix, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." Indulge not the idea, that after you have spent a few more years in the vain amusements of life, you will then think of religion, but "seek the Lord now, while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;" and prove by your own example, the loveliness of early piety.

CAROLINE.

Admonition from the Death-bed.

IT is a great thing to die! These were the words of a sick mother to her son, both of whom, for a number of years, had professed to be Christians, and often conversed together on the nature of faith and repentance, the duties of a holy life, and the comforts peculiar to piety. The mother was rational, while her body was sinking under a fatal disease. The son had been several months absent. On seeing him enter the room, with great emotion, she said, "I am going to leave you."—To which he replied, "Madam, I trust you are supported by your past hope."—After a short pause, she replied, nearly in the following manner:—"It is a great thing to die! I have had a hope from my youth, but not without many seasons of darkness and doubting for myself. These led me to examine my hope, and generally ended in my comfort. I have had many seasons of great joy, in which it seemed as though God so filled my soul with the light of his countenance, that it would be easy to die. I have had some sore afflictions, under which God did not forsake me, when flesh and heart were ready to fail.—My life hath been filled with sin and imperfection, for which I ought to humble myself. Yet, all this doth not destroy my hope; I must think that it is founded on the rock of ages.—When I was first taken sick, I tried to recover those clear views by which I had been at some times transported; but, God hath denied them and I now find I must die by faith."—On being asked what she meant by dying by faith, she said, "I firmly believe God to be powerful and gracious, and that Christ is able to save, to the uttermost, those

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who look to him. Although a sinner, I think I have looked to him; I love God and Christ and the gospel; I choose to be in God's hand. If God be glorified, I cannot be very unhappy; at the same time, I have no great consolation, as I used to wish I might have in the hour of death." In this state she continued until her last moments, and we believe she slept in Jesus.

Christian Reader, can you die by faith? Death is an hour to which you are daily approaching, in which you wish to have extraordinary support. Will it not be a sufficient support to die by faith? It was by faith, those eminent saints, who are mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, lived, endured persecution and died. Did they need greater strength or a better support? or can we wish for more clear evidence of their happy end?—But how may we expect to die by faith? What provisional means are necessary for this happy end? Certainly, none are more necessary than to live by faith. We have no right to expect the benefits of a faith in death, which we have not exercised in life. An habitual exercise of Christian grace and practice, makes it easy for a good man to commit himself to God, whether he be living or dying. An apostle tells us, of "joy unspeakable and full of glory." This is not the rapturous transports of imagination, as some are ready to think by not attending to his whole description. It is the joy of seeing and relying on God by faith. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."—This unspeakable joy is the comfort and support derived from that faith, by which Christians live; it gives them strength in discharging the duties of life, resisting temptations and departing to appear in the presence of God.

P—s.

The following is a plan adopted by some of Christ's flock at the southward, and with two small alterations as to the times of meeting in accommodation to the customs in this state, is here inserted for the consideration of those who pray for the prosperity of Zion.

1. THE special object of these societies, is the offering up of united prayer to God for a blessing on the Ministry of the Gospel of Christ his Son, in that Church to which the members of them belong. But, although this is to be considered as the special object, yet it will be proper to present supplications in behalf of other Churches, and for the Church Universal.

2. The time of meeting should be in the morning, or, if more convenient to any, in the afternoon of the Lord's Day, previously to the commencement

of public worship; so that an hour or an half hour may be spent in this exercise.

3. The number of members in each society should be small; because it will be more convenient for a few to assemble, and more freedom will be enjoyed by the members who may be familiar friends. Two will be sufficient for a beginning; the Saviour's promise is, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." When any society shall have increased to eight or ten, it will be expedient to divide it; for, by this means, the number of praying persons will be increasing, in as much as each division may attract others to itself.

4. It has been mentioned that the special object of these societies is the offering up of prayer to God. But it may be advisable and profitable to diversify the exercise by reading a portion of sacred scripture, by conversation on religious truth, and by singing psalms and hymns.

5. Let it be agreed by the members to retire, to their chambers an hour or half an hour before divine service in the afternoon on the Sabbath, and there to meet each other at the Throne of Grace, in renewing their supplications for the same great objects, and for a blessing on the praying society to which they belong, and on all similar societies in whatever part of our country they may have been formed. Here those Christians whose circumstances will not permit them to leave their houses before the commencement of public worship, have an opportunity for acting in concert with their fellow saints.

6. Let males and females form distinct associations.

7. Should any prefer on account of convenience, to meet on some particular evening, the societies may be composed of a larger number; but let it be remembered that as the number increases the freedom which should prevail in them is proportionably diminished, and temptations of a particular kind may begin to work.

Permit us now very briefly to enforce and encourage the adoption of this plan.

Every blessing bestowed on the Church of Christ, is the fruit of an absolute promise. Does God say to Zion, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come?" Does he send down the effusion of his Holy Spirit on a particular part of his Church? Does he render successful the administration of his word and ordinances in any individual congregation? 'Tis because he hath promised to his Son our Saviour, That he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. Still, however, it is our duty, in a humble manner, and with believing confidence in the faithfulness of God, to put him in remembrance of his promises, and plead with him to fulfil them. Between prayer and the bestowment of promised blessings, he hath wisely established a special connection; so that the Church has no reason to hope for the effusion of his Spirit, and the spread of his Gospel, unless she send up her fervent and united supplications; and, on the other hand, when her children are pressing and importunate in their addresses to the Throne of Grace,

she may rejoice, for prosperity draws nigh.

To convince us how powerful is prayer, numerous instances of its remarkable success, are recorded. The pious mind conversant with the Holy Scriptures, will readily recollect the signal efficacy of the prayers of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Hezekiah, Elias, and a long train of other Saints; and, from the recollection of it, will become more convinced that "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

If recent instances of special answers to prayer were required to prove its continued efficacy, it would be easy to produce them. In that very house which was opened in a certain town to receive a praying society, a remarkabe awakening commenced; and in the neighbouring town began, manifestly in answer to prayer, a still more glorious work of God. Indeed we may safely say that the various revivals of religion in our country, are the fruits of prayer.

Having, then, such great encouragement, accede, Christians, to this plan, and unite together in offering fervent supplications to a gracious God for a revival of religion in the Church and Congregation to which you belong. Make the experiment, and see if God will not send down a special blessing.

Christian reader, art thou unwilling to share in the honour and happiness of being instrumental by thy prayers, in procuring a revival of religion in the Congregation of which thou art a member?

ORDINATION.

ON the 3d Feb. Rev. GEORGE LEONARD was ordained to the pastoral care of the first church in Canterbury, (Con.) Rev Elisha Atkins of Killingly made the introductory prayer; Rev. Nathan Perkins, D. D. of West Hartford preached a well adapted and impressive, an elegant and evangelical sermon from Romans x. 15. Rev. Andrew Lee of Lisbon made the consecrating prayer, Rev. Josiah Whitney, D. D. of Brooklyn gave the charge, Rev. Erastus Learned, Westminster society, Canterbury, gave the right hand of fellowship; and Rev. Dr. Perkins made the concluding prayer. An unusually pleasant day, a numerous and attentive assembly, appropriate music and psalmody, were all circumstances that combined to heighten the agreeableness and the solemnity of the interesting occasion.

THE Committee appointed by the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, to send religious books to the inhabitants of the new settlements, and to receive donations of books for that purpose, return their thanks, in the name of the Trustees, and of the Society, to A FRIEND OF MISSIONS, who has generously subscribed for 50 Copies of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine and Religious Intelligencer, for one year, and directed the Publishers to deliver that number of Magazines monthly, to the Committee, to be sent to the new settlements.

By order of the Commmittee,
JONATHAN BRACE, *Chairman.*

POETRY.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.

A Hymn for Christmas Day.

Written by the celebrated Chatterton when he was about eleven years of age.

ALMIGHTY framer of the skies !
O, let our pure devotion rise,
  Like incense in thy sight !
Wrapt in impenetrable shade
The texture of our souls were made
  Till thy command gave light.

The sun of glory gleam'd the ray,
Refin'd the darkness into day,
  And bid the vapours fly :
Impell'd by his eternal love,
He left his palaces above
  To cheer our gloomy sky.

How shall we celebrate this day,
When God appear'd in mortal clay,
  The mark of wordly scorn ;
When the Archangels heavenly lays,
Attempted the Redeemer's praise
  And hail'd Salvation's morn !

A humble form the Godhead wore ;
The pains of poverty he bore ;
  To gaudy pomp unknown :
Tho' in a human walk he trod,
Still was the man Almighty God,
  In glory all his own.

Despis'd, oppress'd, the Godhead bears,
The torments of this vale of tears ;
  Nor bid his vengeance rise ;
He saw the creatures he had made
Revile his power, his peace invade :
  He saw with mercy's eyes.

How shall we celebrate his name,
Who groan'd beneath a life of shame,
  In all afflictions tried ;
The soul is raptur'd to conceive
A truth which being must believe*,
  The God eternal died.

My soul, exert thy powers, adore,
Upon devotions plumage soar,
  To celebrate the day ;
The God from whom creation sprung
Shall animate my grateful tongue ;
  From him I'll catch the lay. S.

* The transcriber is not responsible for the obscurity of this line: it belongs to the original.

The Happy Penitent.

GREAT is the luxury of grief,
The offspring of the contrite heart ;
Tears yield the burden'd soul relief,
And dew-drops grace and health impart.

Let worldly wisdom form her sons
To sullen joy, and hearts of steel ;
Pride mock at penitential groans,
And folly teach 'tis vain to feel.

Be mine the pleasures of the soul,
That glows and burns with gen'rous shame,
That loves o'er each offence to roll,
And mourn a SAVIOUR'S injur'd name.

Ah ! little know the cold and vain,
A Saviour's worth, a Saviour's love ;
The price of pardon, death of sin ;
Or weal of wo if HE approve.

Know ye, who these keen pangs despise,
That JESUS bears in each a share ?
To give them birth HE left the skies,
To give them worth, he mediates there.

So just these sorrows GOD approves,
These are the sacrifice HE claims,
And what He claims true virtue loves,
And only what HE censures, blames.

The dropping cloud alone receives,
The beauteous tints that grace the bow ;
The token of GOD'S cov'nant gives,
And seals his truth and mercy too.

Distil my soul and take the sign,
Nor check the penitential tear,
A better covenant's promise thine,
And fairer far the tints you wear.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SEVERAL Communications have been received which are now under consideration.

Senex is desired to continue his letters of caution.

The second Letter from Matilda is received.

The Letter from Urbanus on Christian politeness is received. So far as manners indicate true benevolence of heart, they are part of the Christian character. We fear that some of the maxims in this communication contradict the Apostolic injunction "Be not conformed to this world." It cannot be admitted.